

## **Portland Harbor Superfund Site Briefing Paper**

November 13, 2009

Site Status: The draft Portland Harbor Remedial Investigation (RI) Report was delivered to EPA by the Lower Willamette Group (LWG), a coalition of 10 potentially responsible parties, on October 27, 2009. The RI report presents a comprehensive look at the nature and extent of contamination in surface and subsurface sediment, fish and shellfish tissue, surface water, groundwater, and storm water. It also describes the physical features, current and historical land and harbor uses and fish and habitat areas of the river and nearby lands. If the RI meets EPA expectations, the anticipated project schedule is for a draft Feasibility Study in 2010, a Proposed Plan in 2011 and a Record of Decision (ROD) in 2012.

The risk assessments in the RI report indicate that risks to both human health and the environment are primarily due to PCBs and dioxins and furans. PAHs, pesticides, tributyl tin, other metals and VOCs also pose risk at Portland Harbor. The greatest risk of human health effects is from ingestion of resident fish. The greatest risk to ecological receptors is that of benthic organisms exposed to contaminated sediment and groundwater, and the wildlife that consumes contaminated benthos. Background levels of PCBs associated with the Willamette River watershed will be a factor in reducing the risk associated with fish consumption to acceptable levels.

Site Description and Background: The Portland Harbor site is an 11-mile reach of the Willamette River between downtown Portland and the Columbia River. The site was added to the NPL in 2000. The site is primarily industrial, but also provides recreational opportunities, aquatic habitat and is an important migratory corridor for ESA listed salmonids. Key sources of contamination to Portland Harbor include urban stormwater and contaminated groundwater discharges.

Time Frame for Congressional Briefing: Tentatively scheduled for December 3, 2009.

Issues raised by Congressman Blumenauer and Senator Merkley: Schedule, cost and the adequacy of EPA resources to support the FS were the primary issues identified. Optimistic early schedules targeted a ROD in 2008, but given the size and complexity of the site, it soon became apparent that completing a rigorous analysis and working through difficult issues would take substantially more time. The LWG has assured EPA that they have sufficient funding to complete the RI and FS, and told EPA that their current expenditures exceed \$74 million. This estimate does not include state or federal agency costs not directly related to overseeing the RI/FS or upland source control efforts. EPA has arranged for the necessary personnel and expertise to support the FS by using contractors and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Environmental Dredging Research Center (ERDC). EPA has been scoping the FS both internally and collaboratively with the LWG since early 2009.

Community Issues: The Portland Harbor Community Advisory Group (CAG) has been actively engaged with EPA since shortly after the site was listed. Issues raised by the CAG include opposition to a confined sediment disposal facility and a preference for treatment as a tool for remediating contaminated sediment. Community concerns also include minimizing short term impacts during cleanup, reducing risk to river-adjacent communities and river users, and making sure responsible parties are held accountable.

Other Issues: Identifying and controlling dozens of upland sources of contamination prior to implementing a sediment remedy is a significant workload being accomplished under the lead of the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ). As part of an ongoing search and identification of Potentially Responsible Parties, EPA has sent out approximately 280 104(e) information requests and 92 General Notice Letters. Early cleanup actions have been completed at the Terminal 4 and GASCO sites and planning is currently underway for two more at Arkema and Gasco/Siltronic.

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